

~~SECRET~~

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-01617A000200150002-8

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 74

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

8 October 1948

ANALYSIS OF REPORTS CONCERNING THE EVACUATION BY AIR FROM PALESTINE
OF A PARTY IMPLICATED IN THE ASSASSINATION OF THE UN MEDIATOR

I. A. General Discussion

The present study will examine the known circumstances in connection with a reported evacuation from Jerusalem of individuals involved in the assassination of the UN Mediator, with a view to suggesting possible avenues of further investigation. The reported evacuation in a "Czechoslovak" aircraft of this small task force (30 men) gave no details of the ownership and type of aircraft used, the route flown or possible refueling stops en route to destination. Such information would materially aid in identification of the assassins and narrow the search for them to specific areas. According to the report, the evacuees were en route to Prague, possibly with Paris as their ultimate destination. Positive identification of the type of aircraft employed would be particularly helpful. This would limit the field of possible owners, due to the fact that the number of aircraft of any given type, available to the interests involved in the incident and which would be capable of transporting such a load, is relatively small. Identification of the type of aircraft would also give an indication of its range of operations with the given load, and thereby assist in establishing whether the flight was non-stop.

B. Possible Use of Scheduled Airline

As the evacuees were provided with aliases and travel papers, they may have been moved out of Palestine by regularly-scheduled aircraft, or by a special operation disguised as a normally-scheduled flight. (Czechoslovak Airline "CSA", which has recently increased its schedules to Haifa, and the Italian airline, Societa Italiana Servizi Aerei "SISA", are the only regular carriers serving Palestine on a regular basis.) It would be probable, however, that if an aircraft with sufficient range for a non-stop flight to Czechoslovakia was available, such an operation would have been selected for security reasons.

C. Type of Aircraft Used

It appears more likely that either a C-46 or C-54 was used for this operation than a DC-3. The distance from Jerusalem to Prague is approximately 1,600 miles. A DC-3, loaded with 30 persons (approximately

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-01617A000200150002-8

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 2 -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

5,250 pounds) is limited to a distance of some 1,050 miles. A C-46, however, could reach a point of refuge approximately 1,600 miles distant carrying the same load. A C-54 would even be capable of a direct non-stop flight to either Prague or Paris and beyond.

If the flight was handled by one of the regularly-scheduled airlines, the aircraft used would have been a DC-3, because this is the only type used for their operations. In this case, intermediate transit stops would have been made.

If a clandestine flight was made, it is probable that this was a non-stop operation by a type of aircraft with capabilities greater than those of a DC-3. Traveling clandestinely from Palestine, a DC-3, by making a direct overflight of Turkey or Greece, could reach southern Yugoslavia or southern Bulgaria. Air traffic across the borders into Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, however, is closely and actively watched by Greece and Turkey. The latter is known to maintain an intermittent radar search. It is unlikely that this type of aircraft would be utilized under these circumstances, with the risk of detection at a time when fuel supply would be nearly exhausted.

Although a C-54 could easily fly non-stop to Prague, a C-46 with a maximum load might not reach Prague, but could make Bratislava in southern Czechoslovakia (less than 1,600 miles) by overflying a small area of Greece and most of Yugoslavia. A C-46, moreover, could easily have flown non-stop to Ajaccio. (In spite of the reported plans to fly the evacuees to Prague, the flight may have had Paris as its destination. In this case, a refueling stop at Ajaccio rather than Prague may have been made. Ajaccio has been used successfully in the past for such purposes by aircraft engaged in the clandestine transport of arms to Palestine; the route, moreover, is more secure from observation, being almost entirely over water from Palestine to the French coast; and Ajaccio is on as direct a route to Paris as is Prague.)

B. Availability of Aircraft

While the aircraft used for evacuation is reported as "Czechoslovak", it is not known how the observer was able to determine this. The Czechoslovak Airline "CSA" operates a fleet of DC-3s. No C-46 or C-54 aircraft are known to be owned by Czechoslovak interests. Two C-54s and seven C-46s, however, now believed to be based in Czechoslovakia, have been used for the clandestine transport of war material to Palestine. Most of these aircraft are operated by the US-owned Service Airways subsidiary, Lineas Aereas de Panama, S.A. (LAPSA).

- 3 - ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

At least eight DC-3 aircraft, owned by Pan African Air Charters "PAAC", are known to be based in Israel. These have been operating under contract to the Israeli Government in the transportation of DPs from Europe to Haifa. PAAC, furthermore, may also be operating C-46s obtained on a charter basis from the US irregular carrier, Skyways International. An organization known as Israelair is also reported to be flying commercial operations with DC-3s between Haifa and France, and the reportedly newly-formed Israel National Aviation Company "INAC" has operated a C-54 from Geneva to Israel.

II. A. Air Fields

The aircraft employed in this operation is reported to have taken off from Jerusalem on its flight to Europe. The only airfield near Jerusalem, which might be suitable for an aircraft as large as a DC-3 is Kolundia airport, which is located 5-1/2 miles north of the city, and is in Arab hands. It is unlikely, therefore, that Kolundia was used for the evacuation of the party of assassins.

Two small landing strips also exist in the vicinity of Jerusalem, but these are suitable only for liaison type aircraft.

Several airfields suitable for multi-engine operations are known to be located between Jerusalem and the coast. Most of these are in the vicinity of the important Lydda airport, which is controlled by the Jewish forces. Although the Arabs are able to block one point on the main road leading to the West from Jerusalem, this point is easily circumvented. As the assassination occurred at 5:00 p.m. on the 17th of September and the aircraft did not take off until sometime late on the 18th of September, movement toward a prearranged rendezvous at an airfield in the Lydda area would have been feasible. This plan of operation in fact seems to fit best the existing conditions.

Appendix A contains additional information concerning available airfields.

III. A. Intelligence Requirements

Appendix B contains the collection requirements which should be implemented without delay in order to uncover the additional facts necessary to the complete clarification of the evacuation incident.

~~SECRET~~